



RAINFOREST TRANSFORMATION



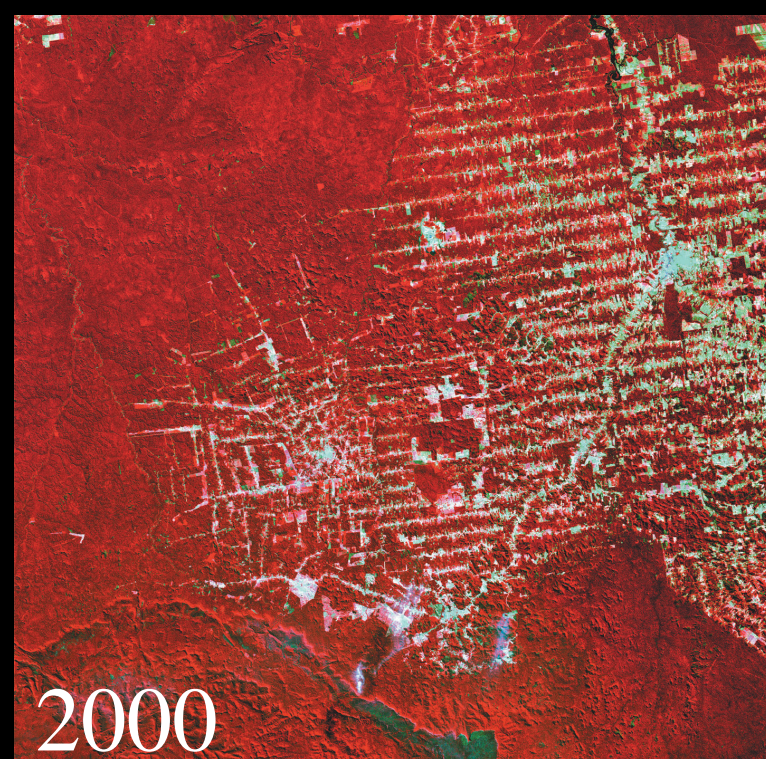
Deforestation in Rondonia, Brazil

In a continuing effort to decentralize the Brazilian population and explore undeveloped regions, the Brazilian government constructed the Cuiabá-Pôrto Velho highway through the province of Rondônia. Completed in 1960, the road served as the spine of access for infrastructural development into tropical rainforest ecosystems, previously occupied only by the indigenous people of the region. The highway connected the north and western parts of Brazil with the more urbanized areas of the south central and coastal areas.



Deforestation for Agriculture

The 1986 image exhibits substantial immigration to the area between 1975-1986. The predominant "Feathered" or "Fishbone" pattern on the landscape is the result of logging operations, providing mechanized access to land resources. Primary land uses are cattle ranching and annual crop farming. More sustainable perennial crops, like coffee, cacao, and rubber, occupy less than 10 percent of the agricultural land areas.



Sustainable Agriculture, Lost Forests

Space for agriculture continues to threaten the Brazilian rainforest. In the central portion of the Landsat 7 image from 2000, a distinctive net-shaped pattern of clear-cut is evident. Despite encroachment, programs are attempting to preserve the cleared lands with more sustainable multi-use functions providing a wider array of income-producing products for local farmers.